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American Federation
of
Government Employees

Lodge 31 A.F.G.E.

Affiliated with
American Federation of Agriculture
of Labor

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LIBERALISM WILL BRING RELIEF FROM "DROUGHT" AND "PESTS"



THE A. F. G. E. CONVENTION

Lodge 31 has passed the following resolutions which are to be submitted to the A. F. G. E. National Convention in Detroit beginning September 14, 1936:

1. A resolution of importance to the entire Department of Agriculture, namely, to instruct the National Office actively to seek reallocations upwards for the thousands of government employees who, as a result of the Economy Act, are now engaged in duties far above those specified in their classifications.
2. A resolution instructing the A. F. G. E. delegates to the 1936 Miami Convention of the American Federation of Labor to vote against expulsion or any disciplinary action against those unions participating in the Committee for Industrial Organization. This we feel to be of importance since the A. F. G. E. is essentially an industrial union with local lodges having jurisdiction over all workers in any given department or bureau, regardless of the duties of the employees. We also feel it to be important that the organized labor movement in this country not be split, which would be the result if the powerful block of progressive unions participating in the C.I.O. were to be expelled.
3. An amendment to the A. F. G. E. Constitution so that National Vice-Presidents, who are selected from districts throughout the country, may be elected by the delegates from their own districts, rather than by the Convention at large. This and the next one are in line with the democratic principles espoused by Lodge 31.
4. An amendment to the Constitution to provide for election of A.F.G.E. delegates to the National A.F. of L. Convention, instead of their being appointed, as at present, by the A. F. G. E. National Council.

This year's National Convention will be one of the most important ever held. In its rapid march forward, the labor movement is undergoing great changes which will affect all workers, including government employees.

Lodge 31 delegates to the Detroit Convention are James Radabaugh and John Schricker. The following were elected alternates: Irven Naiman, Elliott Moyer and Ida Klaus.

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WHAT DOES "PICKETING" MEAN???

Justice Lodge 21 has been suspended from the A. F. G. E. on the grounds that members of that lodge were guilty of picketing, which is in violation of the Constitution of the A. F. G. E.

Does the fact that circulars were distributed outside of the Department of Justice by union members mean they were picketing? Webster's dictionary defines "picket" as applied to labor, as follows: "A person posted by a labor organization at an approach to the place of work affected by a strike to ascertain the working men going and coming and persuade or otherwise influence them to quit working there." If under the terms of our Constitution, distributing circulars is to be construed as picketing and therefore place any government union guilty of this act liable to suspension, it would be well to be informed of the fact.

A resolution was passed at the last meeting of Lodge 31 to send a letter to the Acting President of the National Organization of the A. F. G. E. inquiring for what specific act or acts the Justice Lodge was suspended, requesting a clarification of their interpretation of the term "picketing," and inquiring as to whether distributing circulars is construed as picketing.

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JOIN LODGE 31 !!!

DICTATORSHIP OR DEMOCRACY ?

During the past two weeks the A.F.G.E. has been treated to a tremendous amount of unsavory publicity of a nature likely to redound to the discredit of the organization. With charges and countercharges of "radical" and "reactionary" resounding in the press, the members and potential members of Agriculture Lodge 31, whose purpose is to defend the interests of government employees, may well be disturbed.

The seriousness of the existing dispute and the attitude and actions of Lodge 31 require an explanation.

On August 6, 1936, after mature consideration in meeting assembled, Lodge 31 voted unanimously to seek the recall of those National officers who, since their election, have threatened the democracy of the organization and the autonomy of the several lodges.

The executive committee of Lodge 31 has been aware for sometime of an autocratic trend within the organization. Various acts, both overt and covert, attributed to the National Office, have been discussed with growing indignation and alarm. Upon the suspension of the Department of Justice Lodge, the membership of Lodge 31 voted in meeting assembled to authorize its executive committee to cooperate with other lodges in seeking redress for the suspended lodge.

At this point the National Office circulated a statement threatening to suspend any group that dared to assist the Department of Justice Lodge - a threat against perfectly permissible action on the part of the lodges. Incidentally - intercommunication is strictly forbidden by the constitution except insofar as it pertains to the recall of a national officer, an amendment to that effect having been passed at the last convention. Therefore, by instituting recall proceedings, no provision of the constitution was impinged upon. The result of a conference with representatives of other lodges, among whom were Labor 12, Veterans Bureau 17, Boltsville 125, W.P.A. 139 and Resettlement 206, was a resolution calling for the recall of the four Washington members of the National Council,

Treasurer Cecil E. Custer and Vice-Presidents Ira Y. Bain, Carroll Dimond and Michael D. Schaefer namely, those who were deemed mainly responsible for the inroads upon lodge autonomy.

The charges accompanying the resolution, briefly summarized, are as follows:

- (a) Withholding of information to which the membership was entitled, specifically with regard to the Babcock Case.
- (b) Unconstitutional suspension of Justice Lodge 21.
- (c) Unjust suspension of Panama Canal Lodge 6.
- (d) Undue assumption of power not specifically granted by the constitution in delaying the granting of charters to new lodges.
- (e) Denial of representation to new lodges.
- (f) Refusal to grant either charters or temporary certificates of affiliation to certain new lodges and unwarranted interference in lodge affairs.

These charges were discussed at the meeting and filed without publicity. We regret that the objects of those charges saw fit to permit a blast of public vilification as an answer to those charges. We are confident, however, that our membership grasps the significance of this attack - a smoke-screen to obscure the growing circumscription of democratic rights and principles. The "Red Scare" is nothing new. Let us meet it without fear, in the spirit of true American democracy. Let us build up our lodge on the same basis upon which it was founded - a truly representative body, liberal in principle. Let us announce now a membership campaign to enlist within our ranks all Agriculture employees, who are imbued with the spirit of democracy and fair-play. Let them take part in our meetings, already well attended. Let them show that democracy is not dead, that dictatorship cannot happen here.

A NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Prospective Union Members quite often ask, "What accomplishments can the Union show for itself?" Government employees are prone to minimize the value of our legislative activities although it can be pointed out that our Federation has the unqualified support of the A. F. of L. legislative groups.

Lodge 31 has been active in the interests of employees in a number of ways: one of our "Five Star" successes being the Replacement Division, set up under the W. P. A.

Early in 1935 some 15 A. F. G. E. lodges banded together to form a Committee for Job Security. This committee, after interviewing a number of Cabinet members and other officials, and after sending a delegation to the White House, was able to obtain an Executive Order, signed by President Roosevelt. This Order established the Replacement Division, under the Works Progress Administration, but applicable to all temporary employees released without prejudice. It became mandatory upon personnel officers to send to this Division the names and qualifications of all dismissed employees, and mandatory to consult these rolls before employing newcomers to Washington.

In addition to helping workers dismissed by shrinking New Deal Agencies, it was designed to eliminate the possibility of an army of former job holders getting stranded in Washington while hundreds of would-be workers were being imported.

Here is evidence of accomplishment. In the first six months of 1936, the Replacement Division placed 4000 workers out of a total of 5123 emergency appointments made. The Treasury took 668 out of a total of 668, or 100%. Agriculture took 493 out of a total of 505, and Resettlement took 327, which represents almost 100%. We feel that this a very definite accomplishment.

This Executive Order, however, is not altogether satisfactory because it covers dismissals only of temporary employees. The Committee for Job Security strove for a well worked out program which would have established a permanent agency to protect all employees, Civil Service as well as temporary. This plan, if adopted in its entirety by the Government, would prevent a recurrence of the hectic summer of 1933, when large groups of old line employees were being suddenly fired as a result of the Economy Drive - a time when the newly created agencies were hiring more than enough personnel to have given work to all.

The comprehensive protective plan, proposed by the Committee for Job Security, can still be won by combined effort.

Given a sufficiently large membership, Lodge 31 can go a great way in obtaining such protection for Agricultural employees.

JOIN LODGE 31. Help along this good work which you may be sure will be continued.

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LODGE 31 MEETS Thursday, Sept. 3, 1936 at 8:00 P.M. in Room 2050 South Bldg.

You can add to the security of yourself and your fellows by joining Lodge 31. If you are not already a member, see C. C. Warren in Room 3718 South Building today!

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At the last meeting of Lodge 31, Mr. Val Lorwin of Labor Lodge 12 gave an enlightening talk on the need for unionizing farm workers. Anyone desiring more information on this subject should get in touch with the Washington Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers, Room 552, Transportation Building.

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